



May 3, 2005

Dear County Commission Executive Director:

Subject: Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards
(CARES) for the Early Learning Workforce

First 5 California Children and Families Commission is pleased to provide this Request for Funds (RFF) for the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) for the Early Learning Workforce. This fourth round covers the time period from July 1, 2005 to December 31, 2008 and funds a comprehensive training and retention program that builds on the five-year Matching Funds for Retention Incentives Pilot Project. Evaluation results from the Pilot Project demonstrate that the Project substantially increased the number of Child Development Permits and college units acquired by participants. The Project also significantly improved center-based staff retention.

All counties (including both those joining the project for the first time and those participating in earlier rounds) are invited to submit a comprehensive application for this fourth application round. **The application deadline is June 30, 2005.** County Commissions eligible for participation must have active child care retention incentive (CRI) programs by July 1, 2006 to respond to the RFF. Matching funds will be awarded on a non-competitive basis in which applicants demonstrate their monetary commitment to the project and agree to the terms and conditions stated in the Request for Funds (RFF).

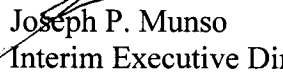
In this current RFF, First 5 California is issuing new standards and program modifications based on evaluation results, county progress reports, input from County Commissions and others, and State Commission priorities. This round will, again, target participants in high priority zone school communities (Academic Performance Index 1-5) and in communities with a low supply of licensed child care.

In order to help support the counties in the application process, there will be a **mandatory RFF Information Session and Conference Call on May 16 from 10:00-11:30 a.m.** Also on May 24, First 5 California and the Child Development

Training Consortium (CDTC) are holding a Transitional Promising Practices meeting. CDTC and CARES program staff will share research findings and talk about effective CARES program strategies that relate to the modifications in the new RFF: training, outreach, targeting, professional learning standards, and system building. Please refer to the RFF for more details about these sessions.

We are looking forward to working with you as you start up or enhance your local CARES program to improve the qualifications and stability of the early learning workforce. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Erik Miyao via email, emiyao@ccfc.ca.gov or by fax, (916) 323-0069.

Sincerely,



Joseph P. Munso
Interim Executive Director

Enclosure

cc: State Commissioners
Sherry Novick